

an elastic instep guard positioned between said instep portion and said liner to protect a metatarsal section of the foot, said instep guard including an elastic support having a plurality of hollow passages and extending from said toe region to said instep region of said vamp.

24. (Amended) Footwear for protecting a foot, comprising:

a vamp of an upper extending from a toe portion to an instep portion;

a liner positioned beneath said instep portion;

a steel toe positioned beneath said toe portion;

an elastic guard positioned between said instep portion and said liner and including a plurality of hollow passages; and

said elastic instep guard is in direct contact with said steel toe and extends from said steel toe toward said instep portion for providing continuous protection to the foot.